

## SEWER SYSTEM SMOKE TESTING

### Frequently Asked Questions

Each day King County will notify the local fire and police departments as to where they will be conducting sewer system smoke testing. **If you have any doubt as to the source of the smoke in your home or yard, immediately phone 911. To ensure your safety, local fire crews will respond as if you have an actual fire.**

- Q.** What is the purpose of smoke testing?
- A.** To find possible leaks in the sewer system and roof drain connections. Smoke testing can help locate faulty pipes and sewer connections which increase the risk of sewer overflow and drive up wastewater treatment costs.
- Q.** Is the smoke used for testing the sewer system harmful?
- A.** No. It may make you cough, but it is not harmful to you, your pets or your plants, and it will not harm clothing, drapes, or furniture. **If there are individuals in your home who have respiratory problems and are immobile, please notify us immediately at (206) 205-3872 prior to testing.**
- Q.** What should you do if smoke gets into your house?
- A.** **To help prevent smoke from entering your home**, open windows for proper ventilation. Also make sure all your pipes have had water run through them recently. Simply flush toilets and pour one quart of water into all drains. This will ensure that the traps in the pipes contain water, which will help prevent smoke from flowing into your home.
- Q.** If smoke gets into my home, how long will it take for the smoke to dissipate?
- A.** It depends upon how much smoke enters the building. Providing ventilation allows the smoke to dissipate more quickly.
- Q.** I'm not going to be home during smoke testing and have pets in the house, what should I do?
- A.** Although the smoke is not harmful to pets, leave several windows partially open for their comfort. If you have proper plumbing connections and all of the water traps in your pipes have water in them, there should not be any problems.
- Q.** Can the smoke testing activate the smoke alarms?
- A.** Yes, smoke alarms may be activated during smoke testing. Make sure to open windows and/or doors for ventilation. If you have any doubts about the origin of the smoke, please call 911.
- Q.** What happens if the inspection crews find a faulty sewer or lack of water traps in a home?
- A.** This information will be documented and used by King County and the Skyway Water & Sewer District to identify needed repairs.

**If you have any questions during smoke testing please call the 24-hour pager hotline at (206)205-3872. Your call will be returned promptly.**

# **48-Hour Sewer Inspection Notice From King County and the Skyway Water & Sewer District**



**King County**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
**Wastewater Treatment Division**

